DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 993 CS 504 212

AUTHOR Masmoudi, Mustapha
TITLE The New World Information Order. [Commission Document] 31.
INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems.
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 28p.; Presented at the third session of the International Commission, July 1978.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Context; Cultural Differences; Developing Nations; Economic Factors; Foreign Countries; *Information Needs; International Relations; *Mass Media; *Program Development
IDENTIFIERS *Media Role; *New World Information Order; Unesco

ABSTRACT

One of a series prepared for the International Commission for the Study of Communication of Unesco, this report elucidates the principal reasons supporting reform of the international information system. Following an introduction that outlines the role of information in developing countries and explains why the current media are inadequate, the report is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the political, legal, and technical/financial aspects of the need for a new information system. The second section explains the New World Information Order and how it is to be established from political, legal, and technical and financial viewpoints. The third section examines measures to be taken by industrialized and developing countries and at the international level to establish a new world economic order, as well as how the media can assist this endeavor through the revised information order. A brief conclusion examines the feasibility of such an information order. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED230993

31

international commission for the study of communication problems

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Unesco

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The new world information order.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

CS 504 212

unesco

THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER

Document presented by Mr. Mustapha Masmoudi,
Secretary of State for Information, Tunisia

This document is one of a series of documents, prepared for the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, established in application of Resolution 100 and the Guidance Notes of the Medium-Term Plan adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its nineteenth session. It was presented and discussed at the third session of the International Commission in July 1978. As the Commission's mandate is of wide concern, this document, which is a preliminary text for discussion, is also being made available to those interested in the subject. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER I	- A New World Information Order: the Whys and Wherefores	3
	A. Political Aspects	3
	B. Legal Aspects	6
	C. Technico-Financial Aspects	7
CHAPTER II	- What is the New World Information Order? How is it to be established?	10
	A. From the Political Viewpoint	11
	B. From the Legal Viewpoint	15
	C. From the Technical and Financial Viewpoints	19
CHAPTER III	- The New International Economic Order and the New World Information Order	21
	A. Measures to be taken by the Industrialized Countries	22
	B. Measures to be taken by the Developing Countries	23
	C. Measures to be taken at the International Level	23
CONCLUSION		24

INTRODUCTION

1. Since the end of World War II, the world has undergone profound upheavals, due to a rapid transformation of political concepts as well as to a change of outlook in men, whether they belong to the developed or to the developing world.

During the second half of this century, these upheavals have resulted in a vast movement of political emancipation. This has enabled a great many nations to slough off the colonial yoke and to accede to the status of independent States, members of the international community.

2. However, this emancipation has not removed all after-effects of past history. At the economic level, present-day international society still suffers from a deep and serious inequality, between developed and developing countries. In all other domains, the same imbalance is to be observed between the two groups of States.

The developing countries have rapidly become aware of the seriousness of this imbalance, and have launched new battles to establish a better international society in all fields, founded on justice, mutual understanding and friendly cooperation between nations.

3. However, these objectives could not be fully achieved if the reform movement failed to affect the international information system.

Information plays a paramount role in international relations, both as a means of communication between peoples and as an instrument of understanding and knowledge between nations.

This role played by information is all the more important and crucial to present-day international relations in that the international community now possesses, thanks to new inventions and major technological breakthroughs, highly sophisticated and very rapid means of communication which make it possible to transmit information almost instantaneously between the different regions of the globe.

However, what must be noted right away is that the present international information system shows a profound imbalance between developed and developing countries. This imbalance is characterized by the fact that the developed countries dominate the information circuit from start to finish. This domination affects the entire present-day transnational communications system, i.e. the news agencies, radio and television, films, reviews, books and illustrated mass circulation magazines, data banks and advertising firms.

4. This situation of imbalance has naturally prompted the wish for a radical overhaul of the present international information system and highlighted the need to establish a new world order for information. While representing one of the many aspects of the required transformation of the world situation, its primary purpose must be to initiate further reforms and to establish other new international orders, more just and more beneficial to the whole community of mankind.

5. In calling for this new world information order, the developing countries are doing no more than invoking the rights solemnly proclaimed by the present-day international community in such important texts as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenants on civil and political rights and on economic and social and cultural rights, and the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Fundamentally linked to the other rights, the right to communicate concerns not only the individual but also groups, nations and societies, and must be given appropriate expression at the international level, in relations between states, nations, societies and cultures. Furthermore, the right to communicate should guarantee not only the right to be informed but also its corollary, the right to inform, to complete mutilated information and to correct false information.

6. The new world information order calls for a universal and skilled effort of awareness. To date, this has been limited by the guarded attitude generated by certain fears and misgivings,themselves aroused by the prospect of change likely to infringe upon immediate interests. It is the role of the media precisely to awaken public opinion to the need for transformations of a nature to benefit all mankind. The idea must everywhere gain acceptance that the present order is but an amalgamation of disorders and that change is therefore imperative.

7. The purpose of the present document is to elucidate the principal reasons militating in favour of change and to identify the measures needed to make a reality of such change.

CHAPTER I

A NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER:

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES

7. Information in the modern world is characterized by basic imbalances, reflecting the general imbalance that affects the international community. They occur in a wide range of fields, particularly in the political, legal and technico-financial spheres.

A. POLITICAL ASPECTS

8. In the political sphere, that is, in respect of the conception of information, these imbalances take many forms:

9. A flagrant quantitative imbalance between North and South.

This imbalance is created by the disparity between the volume of news and information emanating from the developed world and intended for the developing countries and the volume of the flow in the opposite direction. Almost 80% of the world news flow emanates from the major transnational agencies; however, these devote only 20 to 30% of news coverage to the developing countries, despite the fact that the latter account for almost three-quarters of mankind. This results in a veritable de facto monopoly on the part of the developed countries.

10. An inequality in information resources.

The five major transnational agencies monopolise between them the essential share of material and human potential (1), while almost a third of the developing countries do not yet possess a single national agency.

Inequality also exists in the distribution of the radio frequency spectrum between developed and developing countries. The former control nearly 90% of the source of the spectrum, while the developing countries have no means of protecting themselves against foreign broadcasts. It is frequently difficult for them to compete, particularly

---

(1) The top five international agencies together possess more than 500 bureaus, maintain 4319 correspondents or stringers abroad in 116 countries, and each issue a daily average of 1½ to 17 million words.

since some of these broadcasts are transmitted from stations located within developing countries. In respect of television, not only do 45% of the developing countries have no television of their own, but this disparity is aggravated still further by the broadcasting in these countries of a large number of programmes produced in the developing countries.

11. A de facto hegemony and a will to dominate

Such hegemony and domination are evident in the marked indifference of the media in the developed countries, particularly in the West, to the problems, concerns and aspirations of the developing countries. They are founded on financial, industrial, cultural and technological power and result in most of the developing countries being relegated to the status of mere consumers of information sold as a commodity like any other. They are exercised above all through the control of the information flow, wrested and wielded by the transnational agencies operating without let or hindrance in most developing countries and based in turn on the control of technology , illustrated by the communication systems satellite, which are wholly dominated by the major international consortia.

12. A lack of information on developing countries.

Current events in the developing countries are reported to the world via the transnational media; at the same time, these countries are kept "informed" of what is happening abroad through the same channels. By transmitting to the developing countries only news processed by them, that is, news which they have filtered, cut and distorted, the transnational media impose their own way of seeing the world upon the developing countries. As a result, communities geographically close to each other sometimes learn about each other only via these transnational systems. Moreover, the latter often seek to present these communities - when indeed they do show interest in them - in the most unfavourable light, stressing crises, strikes, street demonstrations, putsches, etc. or even holding them up to ridicule. If and when the press in the industrialised countries does present the Third World's problems, achievements and aspirations in an objective light, it does so in the form of special supplements or issues, for which high rates of payment are charged.

13. Survival of the colonial era.

The present-day information system enshrines a form of political, economic and cultural colonialism which is reflected in the often tendentious interpretation of news concerning the developing countries. This consists in highlighting events whose significance in certain cases, is limited or even non-existent; in collecting isolated facts and presenting them as a "whole"; in setting out facts in such a way that the conclusion to be drawn from them is necessarily favourable to the interests of the transnational system; in amplifying small-scale events so as to arouse unjustified fears; in keeping silent on situations unfavourable to the interests of the countries of origin of these media. In this way, world events are covered only insofar as it suits the interests of certain societies.

Likewise, information is distorted by reference to moral, cultural or political values peculiar to certain States, in defiance of the values and concerns of other nations. The criteria governing selection are consciously or unconsciously based on the political and economic interests of the transnational system and of the countries in which this system is established. The use of labels and persuasive epithets and definitions, chosen with the intention of denigrating, should also be stressed.

14. An alienating influence in the economic, social and cultural spheres.

In addition to dominating and manipulating the international news flow, the developed countries practise other forms of hegemony over the communications institutions of the Third World. First of all, they have possession of the media through direct investment. Then, there is another form of control, one which today is far more decisive, namely, the near-monopoly on advertising throughout the world exercised by the major advertising agencies, which operate like the media trans-nationals and which earn their income by serving the interests of the transnational industrial and commercial corporations, which themselves dominate the business world. A further form of domination is represented by the influence used to oppose social evolution; this is practised quite openly by the institutions engaging in propaganda. Moreover, advertising, magazines and television programmes are today so many instruments of cultural domination and acculturation, transmitting to the developing countries messages which are harmful to their cultures, contrary to their values and detrimental to their development aims and efforts.

15. Messages ill-suited to the areas in which they are disseminated.

Even important news may be deliberately neglected by the major media in favour of other information of interest only to public opinion in the country to which the media in question belong. Such news is transmitted to the client countries and is indeed practically imposed on them, despite the fact that readers and listeners in these countries have no interest therein. The major mass media and those who work for them take no account of the real relevance of their messages. Their news coverage is designed to meet the national needs of their countries of origin. They also disregard the impact of their news beyond their own frontiers. They even ignore the important minorities and foreign communities living on their national territory, whose needs in matters of information are different from their own.

16. The fact cannot therefore be blinked that the present information order, based as it is on a quasi-monopolistic concentration of the power to communicate in the hands of a few developed nations, is incapable of meeting the aspirations of the international community, which stands in great need of a system capable of fostering more satisfactory dialogue, conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and dignity. All such political and conceptual shortcomings are worsened - when they are not actually justified - by inadequate international legal structures.

B. LEGAL ASPECTS

17. The traditional conception of rights in matters of communication is founded on individual considerations, to the detriment of collective needs. The present international legal framework is defective, and even non-existent in certain fields. Moreover, the application of present-day legislation is arbitrary. It favours a small number of countries at the expense of the majority, thanks to a conception of liberty peculiar to those who own or control the communication media - and who are frequently the very same people who own or control the means of production. In this context, many questions need to be raised.

18. Individual rights and community rights.

The philosophy which has prevailed to date has given prominence to the rights of a small number of persons or bodies specializing in this field. As a result, the rights and concerns of groups have been more or less disregarded. Yet, if it is true that the right to information is intrinsic to the human condition, it is nonetheless a natural right of every human community, in the sense that each people feels an overpowering urge to communicate with "the other", not only in order to come to terms with and to preserve its own personality but also in order to know and understand other peoples better; and so, through the commication channels established in this way, to create conditions likely to foster a climate of mutual understanding and respect, and cooperative relations that will be beneficial to all.

19. Freedom of information or freedom to inform.

Freedom of information is presented as the corollary of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, but was in fact conceived as the "freedom of the informing agent". As a result, it has become an instrument of domination in the hands of those who control the media. In legal terms, it has resulted in the enshrining of the rights of the communicator, while disregarding his duties and responsibilities towards those to whom he is communicating.

20. Right of access to information sources.

This right is understood in a one-sided manner, and essentially benefits those who have the resources to obtain and impart information. This de facto situation has allowed certain major transnational corporations to turn this right into a prerogative, and enabled the wealthy powers to establish their domination over the information channels.

21. The ineffectiveness of the right of correction.

In contrast to the domestic law of certain countries, the right of correction is regulated very ineffectively by international law. With the exception of the convention of 1952, no valid means exist of enabling States to have false or inaccurate information concerning them corrected. Moreover, the 1952 convention is itself not very effective (Cf. Articles 3 and 4). Regulations in this area are in fact restrictive and unfavourable to developing countries.

22. The absence of an international deontology and the defective character of the regulations governing the profession.

In this context, the imbalance is also fostered by the absence of an international deontology. Attempts made to date by Unesco and the United Nations to institute an international code of ethics suited to the neeeds of the individual and the community have proved ineffectual.

23. Imbalance in the field of copyright.

Matters of copyright have long been regulated by the Berne Convention of 1886, which is protectionist in its scope of application, in the duration of the validity of copyright and in the fewness of the waivers that may be applied to these provisions. The Universal Convention of 1952, revised in 1971 and administered by Unesco, provides for a less rigorous degree of protection. As regards the Florence convention, because of the protectionist effects which it may generate while at the same time fostering the circulation of intellectual works from the industrialised countries to developing countries, it has benefitted the latter not at all. Altogether, the international publishing and distribution system operating today has led, on pretext of protecting copyright, to the predominance of certain commercial interests in the developed countries and has indirectly contributed to the cultural and political domination of these countries over the international community as a whole.

24. Imbalance in the distribution of the source of the spectrum.

The objective must be to denounce the provisions of Article 9 of the Radio Regulations, which enshrine vested interests in respect of the distribution of the spectrum, and to deprive in particular recently independent countries of satisfactory means of making their voices heard.

25. Disorder and lack of coordination in telecommunications and in the use of satellites, compounded with flagrant inequalities between States in this field.

In the absence of any effective regulation, the present inequalities in this field are likely to increase, while the rights of the more powerful will become consolidated in a manner beyond remedy. It hardly needs stressing that such great progress has been made in this field that, without adequate regulation, a veritable invasion of radio broadcasts and television programmes must be expected, amounting to a violation of national territories and private homes and a veritable form of mental rape. This threat cannot be too strongly denounced.

C. TECHNICO-FINANCIAL ASPECTS

26. Because of the structures inherited from colonialism, the low volume of trade and the laxity in economic relations, the telecommunications are far from having met the hopes of establishing closer links and a more intensive flow of information among developing countries. The developed countries benefit from the most efficient and least costly communications channels and resources. The developing countries suffer

all the drawbacks of an organisation which is both defective and costly of the communications system now operating. The developed countries' technological lead and the tariff system for international communications which they have instituted have enabled them to benefit from monopoly situations and prerogatives both in fixing the rates for transport of publications and telecommunications and in the use of communications and information technology.

The most recent attempts to redress this situation, as for example those of Regional Administrative LF/MF Broadcasting Conference(1) organised by the ITU in Geneva, failed to reform the system in a satisfactory way. Indeed, this Conference merely "rubber-stamped" a de facto situation which is detrimental to the interests of the smaller countries.

The advent of satellites is likely to intensify this imbalance if decisive international action is not taken and if technological aid is not furnished to the developing countries. This imbalance is particularly apparent in the following fields:

Telecommunications.

27. The present structures and patterns of telecommunications networks between developing countries are based solely on criteria of profitability and volume of traffic, and so constitute a serious handicap to the development of information and communication. This handicap affects both the infrastructure and the tariff system.

28. With regard to the infrastructure, in addition to the absence of direct links between developing countries, a concentration of communication networks is to be observed in the developed countries. The planning of the infrastructure devised by the former colonial powers precludes, for certain developing countries, all possibility of transmitting information beyond their frontiers (earth stations allowing only reception of television programmes produced in the industrialised countries, with no possibility of broadcasting towards these countries).

29. With regard to tariffs the situation is even more striking and in certain respects quite irrational. Designed so as to disadvantage small outputs the present tariff system perpetuates the stranglehold of the rich countries on the information flow. It is strange, to say the least, that, over the same distance, communications should cost more between two points within developing countries than between two others situated in developed countries.

---

(1) Particularly Regions I and III

Similarly, nothing can justify the fact that the same communication should cost less when transmitted from a developed to a developing country than in the opposite direction. The survival of anachronistic practices is in itself sufficient to explain certain operating norms: why, for example, a telegraphic press circuit sometimes costs as much as or even more than a telephone circuit. How can we accept the privilege enjoyed by the major news agencies, which secure, thanks to the density of their traffic, fulltime use of circuits at a cost that in certain cases does not exceed that of a daily average use of one hour? The situation is aggravated still further in certain countries by the leasing of the telecommunications network to foreign companies whose raison d'être is profiteering, and the channelling of international traffic to their country of origin.

Satellites

30. Although the 1977 Geneva conference endeavoured to establish main heads of a procedure designed to prevent abuses in the rational use of satellites, the developing countries are still threatened by the anarchic use of extra-atmospheric space, which is liable to worsen the imbalance affecting the present telecommunications system.

Distribution of radio frequencies

31. The problem of allocating the frequency spectrum, which is a universal but limited natural resource, arises today with particular urgency. The developing countries are in fact more determined than ever to challenge vigorously the rights that the developed countries have arrogated to themselves in the use of the frequency spectrum. They are also determined to secure an equitable sharing out of this spectrum.

It is common knowledge that almost 90% of the source of the spectrum is controlled by a few developed countries, and that the developing countries, although covering far more extensive areas, possess fewer channels than the developed countries. The power density per square kilometre is four times less in the developing countries than in the developed.

Transport of publications

32. The imbalance observed in the telecommunications field also occurs in the flow of newspapers and publications:

-- tariffs and distribution rates for newspapers are governed, as are those for all other mail, by the Universal Postal Convention, and all member countries of the Universal Postal Union are obliged to respect them;

-- with regard to newspapers, and bearing in mind their role as a means of information, culture and education, the Universal Postal Convention allows member countries the option of granting a maximum 50% reduction in the tariff applicable to printed materials in respect both of newspapers and periodicals, books and pamphlets;

-- in addition to the optional nature of this reduction, air mail is subject to a bottom rate which does not favour the transport of small-circulation publications, i.e. precisely those produced in the developing countries.

33. The developing countries are aware of these dangers and of these various imbalances. The conferences of Heads of State and of the non-aligned countries, the numerous meetings organized by international organisations and the contacts between bodies directly or indirectly involved in the information sector have helped gradually to clarify certain measures to be taken in order to establish a new world information order. To this end, certain structures have been set up both at the regional level (African, Asian, Latino-American and Arab radio broadcasting unions and agencies) and among the non-aligned nations (the Intergovernmental Coordinating Council for Information, the Coordinating Committee of the Press Agency Pool, the Committee for cooperation of the radio broadcasting organizations, the expert committee for telecommunications of the non-aligned countries, etc.).

34. But these remain limited achievements. Their merit is to have given expression to a desire for progress and change. In fact, the essential remains to be done, and there is still a long road to travel. Success depends above all on the developing countries, but is also contingent on cooperation from their partners, i.e. the developed countries and the international organisations. How, then, can this new world information order be established and in what does it consist?

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER? HOW IS IT TO BE ESTABLISHED?

35. "It is both logical and natural to work today for the establishment of a new world order governing the relations between States in the different fields; concomitantly, it is natural to conceive a new world information order capable of answering our entreaties"(1). This quotation aptly poses the question of what this new world information order should consist in. If its principle is increasingly coming to be accepted by public opinion, its content still remains to be defined.

36. It should be emphasized that this new order entails a thorough-going re-adjustment. It is no ready-made recipe, which could enable an unjust situation to be transformed overnight into one less unjust. Because it is the product of a long history, the present situation cannot be put right quickly. The aim must be rather to initiate a process at the national, regional and international levels. Effective, concrete measures are called for rather than academic discussion.

---

(1) Address delivered by Mr. Hédi Nouira, Prime Minister of Tunisia, at the opening of the Symposium of Non-Aligned Countries on Communications (Tunis, 26 March 1976).

37. Seen as an imperative need, even an obligation, this new order is designed to institute a relationship of equality in place of the present one between those who dominate and those who are dominated. It will be illustrated by a free and balanced flow of information organized in respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter concerning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

38. The new world information order founded on democratic principles seeks to establish relations of equality in the communications field between developed and developing nations and aims at greater justice and greater balance. Far from calling in question the freedom of information, it proposes to ensure that this principle is applied fairly and equitably for all nations and not only in the case of the more developed among them.

39. In order to attain this objective, a series of measures should be taken with a view to remedying the imperfections of the present world system, filling the gaps in it and redressing the balance in international relationships in this area. Developing countries must cease to be mere consumers of information and become fully-fledged autonomous producers in the information and communications sector. This need for radical transformation of which the entire international community must be made aware, should give rise to new initiatives at all levels and more or less long-term measures.

A. FROM THE POLITICAL VIEWPOINT

40. In this respect, the aim must be to define a communications policy and the role of information, and to identify the measures to be taken in respect of news collection, editing, selection and dissemination with a view to eliminating the after-effects of the colonial era. It should be constantly borne in mind that information is a social need and not a mere commodity. The hopes, concerns and struggles of communities, groups and nations must be treated on equal terms and with complete honesty and objectivity, while avoiding provocations, supporting the causes of liberty and justice, defending human rights in their full, universal dimension and making every effort to eliminate the sequels of colonialism, racialism, apartheid and all other discriminatory practices and serving the cause of peace in the world. Such measures should be taken at three levels, and concern each of the different media.

41. In respect of developing countries.

The aim must be:

-- to define national communications policies, as being necessary to each country's economic and social development and of a nature to motivate its citizens on behalf of such development;

-- to make provision, in the formulation of such national communications policies, for measures favouring optimum exchanges of news programmes at the regional or sub-regional level, and fostering active and determined participation on the part of all developing countries in the operation of international communications and information centres and networks;

-- to multiply exchange agreements between information bodies, training and research institutes and national, regional and international organisations directly or indirectly involved in the communications sector. In this context, the exchange of journalists and technicians should be intensified with a view to fostering better mutual understanding;

-- to consolidate and develop the established structures, particularly among the non-aligned countries, while at the same time, helping, in cooperation with the developed countries and the international organisations concerned, to establish communications media, to train qualified personnel and to acquire suitable materials and equipment in a spirit of collective self-reliance;

-- to institute and strengthen assistance to the least developed countries;

-- to pay particular attention to the information supplied by the national news collection centres or news pools of the developing countries, on the problems which concern their respective regions or countries;

-- to alert the media of the developed countries to the imbalances, deficiencies and imperfections of the present communications system, by arranging for meetings (conferences, seminars or symposia) between those responsible for the different media in the developed and developing countries;

-- to launch a wide-ranging campaign in the field of communications in the universities of both developing and developed countries, aimed at training or retraining professionals and inculcating the values of the new international economic order and the new world information order;

-- to democratize information resources and structures. At the horizontal level, this implies setting up national news agencies and machinery for cooperation and mutual assistance between developing countries, such as the Press Agency Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries or the regional unions (African, Arab, Asian, Latin-American), and on the vertical plane, curtailing the monopolies of the major press agencies by promoting the conclusion of international agreements aimed at equal and fair utilisation of all communications media, including satellites;

-- to establish a system fostering a free and equitable flow between developed and developing countries, from the point of view both of content, volume and intensity;

-- to implement a national policy to promote literary and artistic creation by instituting a tax system that is as favourable as possible;

-- to encourage the setting up or development of national societies of authors aimed at ensuring optimimum management for the countries concerned of the resources deriving from the exploitation of intellectual works in all their diversity.

42. In respect of the developed countries.

The aim here must be:

-- to call public attention to the action taken by the developing countries, emphasizing the ever-increasing interdependence of the different nations of the world. It is indeed unthinkable that public opinion in the developed countries should continue to be unaware of the widening gap between these and the deprived countries, or to adopt an attitude of indifference to the matter. Enlightened public opinion could play a considerable role in defining the answers to be given to this major challenge of our time. The media in these countries would benefit from helping to bring about a change of opinion, by highlighting existing disparities, and by ending their silence on the progress, problems and concerns of the developing countries. They would also benefit by ceasing to consider users as mere consumers whose requirements are limited to certain products only, to the detriment of all that concerns the developing countries;

-- to help "decolonize" information by taking a more objective approach to the aspirations and concerns of the developing nations, while at the same time eschewing all incitement to hatred or racial, religious, political or any other kinds of discrimination, and all initiatives liable to misrepresent, distort or show in an unfavourable light the measures taken by the developing countries;

-- to help establish a balance in the information flow by devoting more space in newspapers and in radio and television programmes to news concerning developing countries as well as to news concerning immigrants working for the development and well-being of host countries;

-- to promote better mutual understanding by encouraging the media in the industrialised countries to devote greater attention to the content of their transmissions in order to better satisfy the needs of listeners, viewers and subscribers both in and outside their national territory as also to make the cultures and civilisations of other peoples, especially those to whom the transmissions are addressed, more widely known;

-- to ensure that journalists and writers show the utmost prudence and themselves verify the reliability and authenticity of all material, data or arguments used by them which might tend to intensify the arms race;

-- to ensure that journalists respect the laws of the country and the cultural values of the different peoples, and acknowledge that the right of peoples to make known their own concerns and to learn about those of other peoples is as important as respect for individuals;

-- to put an end to the pernicious activities of foreign stations established outside national frontiers;

-- to give particular attention to information supplied by national newsgathering centres or news pools in the developing countries on events concerning their respective regions or countries, and to encourage the mass media to subscribe to these pools and to the main news gathering centres, with a view to balancing and diversifying the news concerning these countries and in general increasing the space allotted thereto;

-- to ensure that, prior to each mission, special correspondents acquire as comprehensive a knowledge as possible of the countries to which they are sent, so as to be able to assess problems and concerns correctly and not see merely the sensational or anecdotal aspect of events, refrain from hasty judgments, free themselves of any distorting ideological lens through which they might be tempted to judge events and people, guard against all bias or prejudice and endeavour to ensure that their conclusions correspond to reality.

43 In respect of the international organisations.

Efforts should be aimed at:

-- enlarging and diversifying the scope of the aid given by Unesco and the other international organisations to developing countries and supplying means for linking up multilateral and bilateral assistance to these countries so as to step up such assistance and render it more effective;

-- helping to promote the development of the media in developing countries both at the national and regional levels; in a spirit of collective self-sufficiency;

-- enabling the developing countries to take advantage of the forums open to them in the international organisations in order to make known their demands and to bring about the establishment of a new world information order;

-- supporting the efforts of developing countries to formulate and adopt national communications policies, to promote research, particularly on the implications of transfers of technology, and to set up documentation centres on communications;

-- instituting a tax in the developed countries which are exporters of literary and artistic works of all kinds, the proceeds from which would help to finance the international copyright fund which is to administered by Unesco.

-- enlarging and diversifying the range of the aid granted to developing countries, and helping them to use the communication sciences to promote social evolution by undertaking studies based on assumptions and methods which reflect the realities and correspond to the needs of the developing countries;

-- granting maximum technical and financial assistance to institutions carrying out research on communications, in accordance with the needs emerging in each country and each region;

-- implementing with all due dispatch and in collaboration with the mass communications training centres which exist in all developing countries, a programme to draw up and coordinate the curricula of mass communications institutes and departments and special vocational training courses in this field. The essential purpose of this programme would be to adapt studies to the specific, practical needs of each country and each region in respect of communications. To this end, a board or consultative panel should be set up on which directors of institutes, departments or university courses in mass communications would serve;

-- promoting, through the grant of fellowships and similar measures, an advanced university training course in the communication sciences. Such training should be given in accordance with the needs, objectives and potentialities of developing countries. It should help to imbue future generations of specialists with a new vision of communication, and introduce a different theory and practice capable of establishing national and international relations that are non-authoritarian and conducted between equals;

-- helping to formulate research programmes and to establish training centres so as to enable developing countries to produce radio and television programmes designed to serve the aims of the New International Economic Order;

-- granting the mass communications sector a status that corresponds to its undoubted importance and to its evident influence on all other sectors of activity, so as to develop an easy and harmonious relationship not only with the cultural sector but also with the education sector and with others that are today less closely linked thereto;

-- devising a clear-cut policy on the use of satellites transmission systems, respecting in all cases the sovereign rights of individual States;

-- encouraging the testing, evaluation and dissemination of new, low-priced and easy-to-use communications technology so as to enable the message of development to reach the masses at present cut off from all such information;

-- helping to establish historical documentation and archives centres in the developing countries.

B. FROM THE LEGAL VIEWPOINT

44. A new definition of the right to communicate

There can be no justice in international communications unless and until rights in this field are redefined and applied on an extensive scale.

Information must be understood as a social good and a cultural product, and not as a material commodity or merchandise. Seen in this perspective, all countries should enjoy the same opportunities of access to sources of information as well as to participate in the communication process. Socio-cultural considerations should prevail over individual, materialistic and mercantile considerations. Communication is like air or daylight: everyone should have the same right thereto. It is the common property of all mankind. The right to communicate must be obstructed neither by individuals nor by entities.

Information is not the prerogative of a few individuals or entities that command the technical and financial means enabling them to control communication; rather, it must be conceived as a social function intrinsic to the various communities, cultures and different conceptions of civilisation. Accordingly, the right of those receiving information should be so regulated as to sanction the functions of interaction and participation and to ensure free and balanced flow of information.

Communication considered as a social need must be adapted to each society, to its particular concerns and aspirations. Hence each nation should be in a position to choose its information in accordance with its own realities and requirements.

45. Equity and equality

In this context, a number of measures should be promoted with a view to ensuring:

-- democratization of the media and information structures, which entails on the horizontal plane setting up national news agencies and machinery for cooperation and mutual assistance between developing countries, such as the Press Agency Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries and the regional unions (African, Arab, Asian, Latin-American), and on the vertical plane curtailing the monopolies of the major news agencies by promoting the conclusion of international agreements aimed at ensuring equal and equitable use of all communication media, including satellites;

-- respect for the rights of those receiving information, in particular the right to objectivity of information and balance in its presentation, so as to take account of their concerns and of the cultural and moral values of the society to which they belong;

-- institution of a system fostering free and equitable circulation between developed and developing countries, from the point of view of the content, volume and intensity of the flow;

-- establishment, at the international level, of the new world information order based on the principles of the equality and sovereignty of States, these prinicples entailing the need to ensure equal access of all to communication media, a fair share in the international communications environment and the right of every State to see its internal order, its options and objectives respected.

46. Right of access to sources

The new world information order must put an end to the imbalance between nations in this field and promote a new conception of access to information based on the following principles:

In respect of current news:

-- regulation of the right to information by preventing abusive uses of the right of access to information;

-- definition of appropriate criteria to govern truly objective news selection;

-- regulation of the collection, processing and transmission of news and data across national frontiers, and in particular of transnational processing, memorization and storage systems so as to protect the individual's right to private life and to ensure respect for the dignity of communities and nations.

-- the new world information order must provide for the right of developing countries to restitution to their countries of origin of archives and historical documents concerning the history of these newly emancipated countries, in particular those in the possession of the former colonial powers;

-- such restitution must be considered an indisputable right deriving from the sovereignty of states and a means of maintaining peace and promoting cooperation between nations. For this reason, the so-called "fifty year prescription" principle should be considered as inapplicable to the countries concerned.

47. Professional deontology

The need to establish an international deontology governing information and communications is becoming ever more strongly felt. The self-regulation of professional media organizations must, to be sure, be given recognition in such a deontology. However, it cannot replace a more wide-ranging formula, since no social group should have the prerogative of not being held accountable to the community to which it belongs.

Journalism is a social function which consists in informing and educating, and journalists have an absolute obligation to be candid and straightforward with their readers, and a further obligation to respect the dignity of their profession. The aim must therefore be to set up effective machinery to protect journalists against undue or improper demands on the part of their employers. The so-called "conscience clause" implies in return that the principles of professional deontology be observed by the journalist.

In this connection, various draft agreements prepared within the United Nations framework (in particular the 1952 draft convention) and the conclusions of the discussions held in Unesco on this subject can serve as a basis for elaborating an international convention on the deontology of the profession. The principles enunciated in such an international instrument should be taken into account in domestic legislation.

Affirmation of the ethical principles intended to govern journalism involves as a corollary the responsibility of those in control of information, who should be accountable for the consequences of any violation of such principles.

The sanctioning of violations of the principles of deontology must be based on:

-- the real and effective right of citizens and communities to have the false or distorted information propagated about them corrected;

-- the implication of the responsibility of the author of such a violation in accordance with appropriate procedures;

-- the amendment of the domestic legislation of the States concerned by incorporating therein the deontological principles referred to in the preceding paragraph.

48. Protection of journalists

The protection of journalists is a key element in the world communications and information system. Such protection should extend to the relations between the journalist and his employers and should enable him to safeguard his freedom of thought and analysis against all potential pressures. It must cover the journalist in the performance of his professional duties, whether he is working abroad or in his own country, undertaking a dangerous mission or operating in normal conditions.

49. The right of correction

The social function of information truly attains its objective only if the information transmitted is true and objective and squares with reality. The journalist betrays his mission if he gives information which is false, tendentious or mutilated, or is dictated by concerns, criteria and choices which are peculiar to himself.

In such cases, the State concerned should have the right to publish or have published a communiqué rectifying and supplementing the false or incomplete information already disseminated so as to give an accurate picture of the facts and to situate these in their true context.

This right also comprises the right for the State which has been the subject of selective or unbalanced information on the publication of an insert whose content is in this view both consistent with reality and a faithful reflection of its concerns and aspirations.

The system can be improved by replacing the present system, involving recourse to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by one whereby domestic legislation embodies the obligation for the organs of information responsible for disseminating the information in question to publish the corrections requested by the individuals or groups concerned. The international convention which is to govern this matter should comprise a list of precisely defined infringements, and protect both the organs of State and the Nation as such, insofar as its prestige, culture and values are involved.

50. A supranational organization

This right of correction should be reinforced by calling to account the individual or legal entity guilty of violating the principles of professional deontology or of propagating false or biased information before an international tripartite body grouping together representatives of States, representatives of the profession and neutral figures known for their moral integrity and competence in matters of information.

51. The distribution of the electromagnetic spectrum and the use of satellites

As has been pointed out by the international organizations responsible for the assignment of frequencies, the natural resources of both the electromagnetic spectrum and the geostationary orbits are limited. This limitation makes it essential to revise the present allocation of the resources of the spectrum and to regulate the use of extra-atmospheric space for telecommunications purposes. This task is all the more urgent in that direct broadcasting by satellite is, according to present forecasts, likely to come into operation in the next decade.

For this purpose, it is essential to provide for:

-- the safeguarding of the rights of countries still under domination to equitable access to the frequency spectrum;

-- the revision of Article 9 of the Radio Regulations and the re-appraisal of the rule of "first come first served" where the frequency spectrum is concerned;

-- a "moratorium" on the free-for-all use of extra-atmospheric space pending the conclusion of an international agreement which satisfactorily guarantees the supply and use of modern telecommunications technical resources in general; the Final Acts of the World Satellite-Broadcasting Administrative Radio Conference, held in Geneva in 1977, should serve as a basis for the drafting of this agreement.

However, while these questions fall in the first instance within the competence of the ITU, they nevertheless involve considerations that lie outside the narrow framework of technology. A number of these considerations have been brought before the United Nations General Assembly and certain of its specialized agencies.

The developing countries must coordinate their action within the overall framework of the United Nations system so that matters lying within the competence of the ITU may be given a significance which transcends the purely technical context.

52. Copyright

In this field, the conventions and regulations currently in force should be revised with a view to ensuring the necessary balance in the circulation of intellectual works between developed and developing countries. In particular the object must be to incorporate into the Florence Convention provisions on behalf of developing countries, as was the case in 1971 in the revision of the Berne Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention.

C. FROM THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL VIEWPOINTS

The measures advocated above can be given concrete form only through an overall reappraisal of technical structures at the international level. In this perspective, the steps to be taken and the goals to be attained may be defined as follows:

53. Telecommunications

-- rethinking the present pattern of the international telecommunications network;

-- fostering the establishment of centres or nodes of communication in developing countries and setting up direct links whenever possible between developing countries;

-- working for the lowering of communication tariffs between developing countries;

-- revising the structure of international tariffs at present in force so as to cease to penalize low outputs, and providing for a tariff system favouring communication from developing to developed countries;

-- planning a cost-indexing system on behalf of developing countries (calculated for example on newspapers' turnover and circulation) designed to impel the major communication media of the developed countries to pay at least the same unit costs as those borne by the developing countries;

54. Use of satellites

-- ensuring that satellites are seen primarily as a means of alleviating certain telecommunications functions hitherto discharged by point-to-point, short-wave transmission;

-- using satellites for transmitting radio and television programmes of developing countries which have hitherto been unable to ensure their adequate diffusion solely by conventional means;

-- winning recognition of the rights of developing countries to maintain the distribution plan decided by the last Conference on Satellite Broadcasting (1977) and demanding that a similar coherent plan be established for all regions of the globe;

-- assigning a predominant role to the developing countries at the next World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) scheduled for 1979;

-- taking appropriate steps within the competent international organizations with a view to obtaining assistance from the developed countries in projects to launch satellites and in the transfer of technology in this area of frontier telecommunications; the setting up of a special United Nations Fund might help the developing countries to launch satellites on orbits allocated to them;

-- encouraging the development of techniques making it possible to avert encroachments beyond national frontiers by preventing all violations of others' cultural heritage and by thwarting attempts at all forms of cultural alienation;

55. Distribution of the frequency spectrum

-- ensuring equitable redistribution of the spectrum, without taking any faits accomplis into consideration, on the basis of a balanced allocation between all regions of the globe;

-- ensuring exclusive assignment of the space gained by extending the spectrum in respect of long and medium waves to sound broadcasting for all regions;

-- maintaining the present status of television bands 1,3,4 and 5 for regions I and III;

-- revising the television channel plans established in Stockholm (1961) and Geneva (1963) with a view to a balanced allocation between all the regions of the world;

-- establishing a plan to govern the use of short waves;

56. Transport of publications

-- encouraging the exchange of newspapers between developing countries on the one hand, and between these and developed countries on the other;

-- taking joint action in order to obtain new favourable terms for newspapers at the next congress of the Universal Postal Union;

-- doing away with the minimum tariff and inducing air transport companies and postal administrations to take joint action in order to reduce the air freight surtax on publications;

-- arranging for the establishment of a fund to facilitate circulation of publications from the South to the North;

57. Transfer of technology

-- formulating an international code of conduct governing the transfer of technology which corresponds to the specific needs and conditions of developing countries;

-- improving the conditions of access to modern technologies and adapting them as appropriate to the economic, social and ecological conditions peculiar to the developing countries and to their varying development levels;

-- extending the assistance given by the developed to the developing countries in the form of research-and-development programmes and by developing appropriate local technologies;

-- setting up a genuinely independent body responsible for advising developing countries on the choice, establishment and use of communications technology (hardware and software).

CHAPTER III

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER

58. The technical advances achieved during the recent decades in all decades in all sectors of economic activity have not been equitably distributed between members of the international community. The income of the developing countries, in which 75% of the world's population is concentrated, at present represents only 30% of world income. Average per capita income in the industrialized countries today stands at $2,400 per annum, whereas that of the developing countries in which three-quarters of the world's population live, is a mere $180. More serious still, the 24 poorest countries have an annual per capital income not exceeding $100. This disparity is bound to increase: it is estimated that in ten years these figures will be $3,400 and $280 respectively.

The developing countries' share in world trade, already limited to 32% in 1950, has continued to diminish, dropping to a mere 17% within the framework of the United Nations Development Decade, was set at 1% of the Gross Domestic Product, is still far from reaching this percentage. The deterioration in the terms of trade (100 in 1953, 84 in 1974) has been attended by a considerable increase in the Third World's debt, which rose to $233,000 million in 1977.

These phenomena were perceived by the developing countries as a continuation of political hegemony and an expression of the will to pursue neo-colonialist exploitation. Conscious of the grave implications of this ever-widening gulf between Third World countries and industrialized countries, and the United Nations proclaimed on 1 May 1974 their common determination to undertake the urgent task of establishing a new international economic order founded on equity and capable of redressing the flagrant inequalities of the present system.

The strategy prescribed involves joint action by the developing and the industrialized countries in all fields of economic and social life. The aim was in particular to set up machinery to ensure price stability of raw materials and the grant of official development aid of a nature to improve the standards of living of Third World populations which, tomorrow, might constitute new markets for the industrialized countries.

However, the failure of these appeals for equity to produce a response or to gain a hearing has soon proved their essential inefficacy. Certain media, breaking with the position of their governments, which had subscribed to the principles of the new order, and seeing in this undertaking a dire threat to the interests of their national communities, have frequently sought to make a mockery of the principles advocated by the Third World, when they have not simply ignored them.

The media have even conditioned public opinion in the developed countries to such an extent as to render it allergic to all claims and demands emanating from the Third World.

Accordingly, the establishment of a new world information order must be considered as the essential corollary of the new international economic order. In order to give concrete reality to this new approach and to enable the media to fulfil their task of educating and informing, measures must be taken both by the industrialized and the developing countries, as well as by the international organizations concerned.

59. A. Measures to be taken by the industrialized countries

The mass media must endeavor to:

-- alert public opinion in the industrialized countries and encourage it to pay greater attention to Third World demands and to support the changes entailed by this new order;

-- foster the sense of community among nations and enlighten national public opinion as to the interdependence of the interests of rich and poor countries and win recognition of the fact that the security of the developed countries' depends thereon;

-- encourage journalists in the rich nations to draw from the mass of available economic information, not sensationalist news calculated to provoke incomprehension and indeed hostility among nations but rather news which highlights the real problems facing the international community - as for example the drought affecting the Sahel - whose solution demands an active show of solidarity and calls for creative imagination and collective initiative on the part of all peoples;

-- present in an objective light the legitimate steps taken by Third World countries in general and the raw materials producer countries in particular, in conformity with the principle of nations' sovereignty over their natural resources.

60. B. Measures to be taken by the developing countries

The present situation, being unjust, precarious and alienating, calls for sustained action at the horizontal level on the part of developing countries in order to align their positions, to strengthen their communications media and to gain a hearing in the concert of nations.

Accordingly, these countries must first endeavour to develop economic information flows within their own regions so as to mobilize public opinion and to win its support for development work.

Inasmuch as the existence of an economic information network is the key to the success of today's most advanced economies, it is imperative for the developing countries to promote their own economic and social information network.

The media in the developing countries must avoid helping to impose an alien mode of existence and life-style; rather, it is their task to bring into being a society which is in keeping with national values and to endeavour to ensure its harmonious and authentic development.

Lastly, it is of priority importance to include the communication and information sector in overall economic and social development planning.

61. C. Measures to be taken at the international level

While endeavouring to overhaul the present economic information circuits and to develop cooperation between the media of the developed and the developing countries, international organizations and in particular the Centre for Economic and Social Information should be encouraged to help to set up and develop national economic and social information networks, whose expansion in Third World countries remains inadequate.

The role played by the Centre in the field of economic information should be increased by endowing it with the necessary structures to enable it to operate as a major economic and social news agency serving the media of the developing countries. In addition, it should be given the task of drawing the international community's attention to all distortions in news concerning the establishment of the new international economic order.

The developing countries should be encouraged, with the assistance of international organizations and non-governmental bodies supporting Third World claims, to cooperate in setting up economic information structures. These structures, which might for example include a data bank, would be responsible for developing economic and social information flows in Third World countries in urgent need thereof. They should also help, through continuous and multifarious efforts, to stimulate an awareness in developed countries of the Third World's economic problems, and thereby to contribute to the establishment of the new international economic order so patiently sought after.

Meetings should be organized between journalists and those responsible for communications in order to promote a wider understanding of the imperatives of the new economic order, and study trips, sponsored by the United Nations, should be arranged for Western journalists in developing countries as also for journalists of developing countries in industrialized countries.

Annual conferences should be held within the framework of the Economic and Social Council, bringing together the information authorities of the developing and developed countries for the purpose of discussing ways and means of improving the dialogue which must lead to the establishment of a new international economic order.

CONCLUSION

62. Is a new world information order a feasible proposition? The concept has continued to gain ground. However, its actual establishment and successful operation are contingent upon the full agreement, sense of responsibility and realism of all those involved in the vast world of communication.

As far as the mass media are concerned, their aim must be to adapt to the new realities. Their contribution is not only desired; it is considered to be decisive. Public opinion and international organizations such as the UN, Unesco and ITU also have a considerable role through the moral and material support which they can give to an undertaking which must benefit all nations of the world.

The process initiated is a complex one, and transformations will take time. What is essential is to familiarize public opinion with change and to promote a responsive awareness of it. "The crux of the matter here is to persuade world public opinion that the problems involved are global, that the world is, in its diversity, an interdependent universe, that men are united by a fundamental solidarity and that solutions based on conciliation serve the interests of all"(1). For the developing countries, self-reliance must be the watchword; this they can achieve by developing cooperation at the horizontal level so as to enable them to establish a balanced flow with the developed countries.

---

(1) Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, in: Moving Towards Change.